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HORSES AND THEIR TREATMENT.

SOME time ago we made some remarks on the growing scarcity and dearth of horses, as ascertained by the committee called for by the Earl of Rosebery in the House of Lords. Since that time, the tax chargeable on horse-dealers has been remitted, with a view to promote the breeding and sale of horses. It was a move in the right direction, and so was the lessening of the tax generally on the keeping of these animals; but such meliorations have had no marked effect. Horses are getting dearer and dearer, and fewer and fewer in relation to the demand. For this result there may be various reasons. One cause of the dearth, however, is pretty evident as lying at the root of the whole matter. From the vast demand for animal food which has sprung up in the general population, farmers find it more profitable to rear sheep and oxen than horses. Lambs come to maturity and are marketable in a few months, or less than a year. Sheep of good breeds are matured, both as respects flesh and fleece, in two years. Here, then, there is a quick and profitable return; and, by good management, things do not differ greatly as regards calves and oxen. The growth of the horse is a very much slower process. The animal is a sort of pet of nature. It is destined to perform not a passive but an active part in the business of the world, and requires care at every stage in its early life. In hardly less than five years from its birth is it ready for saddle or harness. For these reasons, farmers for the most part do not attempt horse-breeding on a scale worth speaking of; well knowing, as they do, that for one horse you may twice over rear fifty sheep, worth three pounds apiece, and with far less chance of misadventure.

There is another consideration. Only certain lands and herbage are adapted for the rearing of horses. The feet of the colt are tender, and require softish and rich ground. Hard stony land on which sheep may pick up a living, will not do for young horses. Formerly, we alluded to another drawback on horse-cultivation. It is the

extreme difficulty of procuring proper animals to breed from. The perpetuation of qualities in animal life is perhaps more remarkable in the horse than in the dog. Every defect is transmitted from generation to generation. Though this fact be well known, there is much practical indifference on the subject; and horses are produced with all sorts of imperfections—*weeds*, as they are called, not much worth; the prevalence of these unfortunate weeds causing an enhancement of price for really sound and serviceable animals. There appears to be a peculiar knack in the culture of horses, which is attained only on a broad scale in Yorkshire and one or two other quarters of England.

Everything taken into account, it comes to this: The British Islands can no longer keep up a supply of horses adequate to the demand, even at a somewhat higher price than is now given. Other countries must be looked to for horses, just as we now look to them for supplies of wheat. France, it appears, is in a similar predicament, and has begun to import large numbers of horses from Russia. On the great western plains of America, one would think there must be a prodigious scope for advantageously rearing horses for export to Europe.

Considering the value of horses of a superior breed, it is wonderful how little thought is bestowed on their treatment. Mr E. F. Flower, a veteran writer on the horse, has again, in a pamphlet on the subject, drawn public attention to a manifest cruelty which cannot be too soon relinquished—the use of gags and bearing-reins. He points out that while the use of this cruel and mischievous apparatus in its different forms is generally disused by cabmen, and drivers of omnibuses and private carriages, it is still employed to a large extent in the case of what are called fashionable and stylish equipages. 'It is,' says Mr Flower, 'a severe penance to any man who loves a horse, to walk along the fashionable streets or the Park, and to witness the sufferings of horses from this absurd and cruel practice. Little does the benevolent dowager who sits absorbed in the

pages of the last tract of the "Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals" know of the sufferings of the two noble animals by whom she is leisurely drawn along the "Ladies' Mile." She probably fancies that the high-prancing step, and the toss of the head which scatters flakes of foam at every step, are expressions of pride and satisfaction at their task, when in fact they are occasioned by pain, and a vain attempt to obtain a momentary relief from suffering.

The principle of the bearing-rein consists in such an arrangement of straps as to oblige the horse to hold up its head, no matter whether the animal is running on level ground or toiling uphill; thereby keeping it in continual restraint. The object is to give it a certain lofty career appearance, which is thought to have a fine effect; the idea of consulting the poor creature's comfort not being for a moment thought of. The seat of torture is the horse's mouth, which is peculiarly susceptible to pain. In the ordinary snaffle-bit, and with a delicate handling of the rein, the animal is guided so as to respond to the rider or driver. The least touch, as it may be, checks it or turns it, according as is desired. And by such connection, there is so great a reciprocity of feeling, that the horse and his rider become for the time a kind of united being. With the view to give greater power over the animal, a bit has been so contrived that in pulling the rein a projecting bend of iron rises against the roof of the mouth, causing the most exquisite pain. This species of bit may be aggravated to any extent, the mouth of the horse being almost filled with an iron apparatus, which through a leverage power acted on by the bridle, drives the creature into a state of distraction. Aware of the terrible power that has been gained over it, the horse tries to take this hideous species of bit between its teeth; but here it is circumvented by a fresh arrangement, consisting of a process called a gag, by which the bit is drawn close up to the inner end of the mouth, where there are no teeth. Whether in riding or driving, the use of this gag bearing-rein is truly frightful. Powerless to relieve itself, the horse frets, champs, gapes, foams, in a degree of misery which ought to excite the liveliest compassion, but which among thoughtless fashionables is thought to be interesting and attractive. As for the driver, he perhaps feels that these movements, caused by acute physical distress, deserve a cut from the whip, and when talked to on the subject, he speaks of the horse as being unruly and ill-tempered, when, in fact, it has been only miserable. Such are the sort of infamous exhibitions of cruelty which we may any day witness in that 'Vanity Fair,' the Ladies' Mile; few giving themselves any trouble about them. It might almost be said there is more cruelty to animals perpetrated daily in Hyde Park than in all London.

Against this atrocity, Mr Flower considerably protests. He reminds us that so far from compas-

sionating the lady's or gentleman's horse for being delivered over to the bus-driver or cabman, it is in a sense to be congratulated. The creature has no doubt had its temper ruined, and is doomed to hard work in its new occupation, but it is freed from the gag and bearing-rein, and 'for the first time is it treated with common-sense and humanity.'

Unquestionably, much of the cruelty here referred to arises from pure ignorance and heedlessness. With proper treatment, the horse is not naturally vicious or unruly. On the contrary, it is peculiarly responsive to gentle and considerate treatment: is anxious to please, willing to act on the merest hint, and is to the last degree submissive to its master. Unfortunately, in our complex social system, it is comparatively seldom under the direct guidance of its master or proprietor; but is handed over to a servant—some 'Master Jeames'—whose chief concern, possibly, is to shew off in livery in an enviably splendid 'turn-out.' A reform in this particular, as we imagine, can only be effected by every proprietor insisting on his or her horses being treated with a proper measure of humanity. Let the gag and bearing-rein be instantly disused, leaving the animals to their natural paces, and to exercise a reasonable freedom of action. Why, or by what authority is any one entitled to make them champ, fret, and foam, by remorselessly, and by a repetition of sudden jerks, causing a rough iron instrument to press acutely on so tender a part as the roof of their mouth? The very thought of inflicting such torture on sentient beings, who are unable to offer any remonstrance, is horrible. Docile and willing, we would almost say noble, slaves, ready to minister to our wants, horses were not given to us to be tormented, but to be treated with all proper kindness, even with the most grateful consideration. As was observed by the Baroness Burdett Coutts in an eloquent address on this subject, 'the cruel infliction of the bearing-rein shews a want of information and knowledge of the horse, and a great lack of knowing what are the capabilities of the animal.' It would be well if this timely observation were more generally taken to heart.

Whether, in being relieved from the gag and bearing-rein, bus and cab horses are in all cases to be congratulated on the nature of their employment, will to many appear doubtful. From the reports of police courts, if not from personal observation, we know that cab-horses are sometimes subject to very odious cruelties; not greater, however, than what may occasionally be witnessed as concerns horses yoked to tramway cars. The invention of street tramways is a kind of return to the rudimental railway, before the introduction of locomotives, and a clever invention it is—always providing the streets are level and spacious, which, generally speaking, they are not. A tramway car laden with from twenty to thirty passengers, and drawn by two, three, or even four horses, is wholly out of place in a town built on an irregular surface, with gradients not to be worked unless at the cost of animal suffering. In such cases the choice lies between public accommodation and cruelty to

animals. Which do you prefer? Make your election. Ordinarily, through some strange indifference, no choice is made at all, and humane people find, when it is too late, that the spectacle of cruelty is daily to be presented, as well as that certain street inconveniences are to be endured. And thus is carelessness followed by its appropriate Nemesis.

One looks with a mighty degree of composure, and, indeed, satisfaction, on a tramway car rolling smoothly along a spacious and level thoroughfare, such as that of the Euston Road. The horses trot merrily forward, as if the draught were nothing, and as if they were out as a piece of amusement. With very different emotions do we see a similar vehicle dragged by heavily breathing, perspiring, and grievously toiling creatures, up a steepish rise, lashed and urged, as used to be very much the practice in the old coaching days, when the poor overworked animals arrived dripping wet, panting, and steaming, at their destination. Obviously, the climbing of hills by tramway cars is unreasonable. On stiff gradients, this species of locomotion ought never to have been attempted. The subject is painful more ways than one. It cannot long, we think, escape a measure of reprobation considerably greater than it has yet, in various quarters, incurred. The ultimate issue will probably be, either the removal of tramways from street inclines, or the introduction of some kind of automatic power. In adopting the latter alternative, the tramway, of course, becomes little better than a railway, against which, in the heart of a city, there may happen to be some objections. One thing is certain—there would, so far, be less cruelty to horses.

A want of knowledge of the horse is conspicuous in the construction and management of stables. In France, over which we have travelled a good deal, stables are for the most part a kind of dens, in which, perhaps, half-a-dozen or more animals are tied up in dirt and darkness. We have seen roadside stables of this sort, which, obviously, had not been cleaned out for months, the whole condition of things being barbarous. Throughout Great Britain, stables are on a better footing. They are mostly kept clean, often neat, and there are regular stalls. But for the greater part they are close and dingy. They want air and light. We have never been able to understand why horses should be tied up in a darkened apartment, within a limited allowance of space for movement, with their heads towards a dead wall. The horse loves the light. He has good eyesight, and likes to look about him. And why should he not have this simple enjoyment? Instead of stupidly tying him up to look dozingly on a blank wall, let us treat him with something like commonsense, by giving him a certain freedom of action according to his nature, at the same time affording the comfort of air and light. To these simple boons the animal is clearly entitled. In the opinion of grooms, a stable may be neat and fanciful, but if it is close, through the effect of a low ceiling, and dingy from want of windows, it is not a proper habitation for the horse.

As a sort of amateur, we have tried our hand on stables, and, after some experience, have come to the conclusion, that, except for special purposes, the whole system of stalls and tying up is wrong. It will do very well for horses that have been out

working all day, and are glad to have a place to lie down and rest. But where the animal may have to spend hours or a whole day doing nothing, as is often the case with gentlemen's horses in bad weather, the restriction is disheartening, if not absolutely cruel. Our opinion is, that there is humanity in giving the means of cheerfulness to the horse, letting him enjoy light and sunshine, with a proper degree of social intercourse with his fellows. Just as people who have little to do, take a pleasure in having a friendly gossip with one another, so are horses pleased with being near, nibbling at, and seeing each other. For anything we know, they are able to carry on by signs and sounds a sort of sympathising conversation, the indulgence in which can do nobody any harm, but rather be amusing to observe.

To allow of as much latitude in movement as possible, and to cultivate health and cheerfulness, we have constructed a stable entirely on the loose-box principle. There are no stalls, and no loft overhead. The stable is open from end to end, and lighted and ventilated in the roof, as also over the door. It resembles a spacious well-lighted apartment, with walls and roof plastered and coloured like an ordinary room—the colour a delicate blue, with cornices white. The floor is throughout laid with smooth pavement; fresh water is copiously laid on, and there is effectual drainage. On one side is a passage, and on the other a row of loose boxes, each twelve feet square, or nearly double the ordinary width of a stall. Each box is inclosed with wood to the height of four and a half feet, above which is an ornamental iron railing to the height of two feet. Laid with straw, and fitted up with feeding-places, these boxes are comfortable little apartments. In them there is room to turn and walk about, or to lie down and sleep in any posture that may be preferred. The horse, in short, is made to feel himself perfectly at home, may do pretty much as he likes. Through the iron railings the animals see each other, and indulge in a nibbling and whinnying sort of converse. The happiness they seem to enjoy is delightful to witness; for when is the expression of innocent and simple nature not grateful to the onlooker? When there appears to be any tendency in the horses to misuse their liberty—and such will occur in young animals—they are tied up in the loose box, as if in a common stall.

In large towns, where space is valuable, it might be sufficient if the loose boxes were made not more than eight to nine feet square, according to circumstances. The great advantage of the loose-box system is, that it enables horses to move about and exercise their limbs, instead of being stuck up in a particular position. Plenty light, however, is scarcely less beneficial. Even gas or lamp light is better than no light at all; for what a dreary thing it must be for horses in winter to pass sixteen out of the twenty-four hours in darkness. The stable we have referred to is fitted up with gas brackets, whence the light is diffused by reflectors, and the horses, of course, pass their evenings in a tolerably agreeable manner.

Some fastidious folks may think it absurd to specify matters so homely as the economics of a stable. To our mind, nothing is to be viewed as paltry or ridiculous that points to means for meliorating the condition of so grand an accessory to our comfort and necessities as the horse. Like

the dog, the horse is the friend and companion of man, besides being an invaluable servant. Providence has beneficently made him so. And such, in a spirit of respectful consideration, should be his treatment.

W. C.

A CURIOUS COMPANION.

'WANTED, by a young married lady, a companion to reside with her during her husband's absence in India. A liberal salary will be given, with every home comfort, to any one suitable. Apply, personally, if possible, at No. 240 Upper Berkeley Street, W.'

The foregoing advertisement was despatched by me after considerable cogitation, and I awaited the results of it with some anxiety.

My husband, Major Conyers, had been suddenly ordered to India; and having no sister or any available cousin whom I could invite to stay with me during his absence, I thought a companion was the best thing with which I could provide myself; accordingly, I indited my small paragraph, which I had the satisfaction of seeing placed in a very conspicuous part of the paper on the morning after I sent it. I lived in London, consequently, felt certain that the personal interview would be easily managed; but I had committed an error in not naming any particular hour, as, from eleven in the forenoon until quite late in the day the applications for a personal interview with my unfortunate self never ceased. The first arrival was a very handsomely dressed lady of about fifty, who came, evidently, quite prepared to enter upon her duties at once, and quite overpowered me with a series of questions and statements, without giving me the faintest chance of making any inquiries myself. She had lived with Lady This and the Honourable Mrs That, and one and all had treated her like a sister—she felt certain I should do the same—indeed, she quite knew me already. Home comforts were exactly what she cared for; as to salary, it was no object to her—a hundred a year was all she asked, though dear Lady Golding had said she was never to take less than two.

'I am afraid,' I put in at this juncture, 'that even one hundred is beyond what I intend to give, and I live so quietly'—

'We won't quarrel about salary,' interrupted my would-be companion; 'and as to quietness, it is just what I want.'

A peal at the door-bell emboldened me to still greater determination, so I replied very resolutely for me: 'I do not think we should suit; I am sorry you have had the trouble of coming.'

'So am I,' she rejoined dryly; 'but one ought not to trust to advertisements.'

Hardly noticing my 'good-morning,' she got up and flounced down-stairs, evidently in great wrath at her rejection.

'Another lady to see you, ma'am,' announced my parlour-maid.

A very quiet, sweet-looking, little person came forward, and at the first glance I fancied I had found a suitable companion. But alas! her story was a sad one, and there were reasons which rendered it impossible for me to avail myself of her society. She was married. Her husband was a hopeless invalid, and they were very poor. She had not been educated highly enough to be a governess, and when she saw

my advertisement, she fancied, if the salary was good, she might be my companion by day, and return at night to her own home, which was at no great distance from my house. She looked so thin and so ill, that I was almost tempted to make some arrangement with her, but as I intended leaving town occasionally, second thoughts shewed me it was out of the question. Besides, I could not have borne to think that while she was with me, she would always be in an agony to be with her husband—which, had I engaged her, would most naturally have followed. I told her so as kindly as possible, and, after making her take a glass of wine and some cake—which latter I saw her furtively convey to her pocket, for the sick husband, I supposed—she gave me her direction, and took her departure. I afterwards went to see her, and her tale was sadly verified. But to proceed.

My next visitor was a most pert damsel, without any pretensions to being a lady, who informed me that her pa was dead, and as there were so many of them at home, her ma wanted her to do for herself. I had not much difficulty in dismissing her. And of the legions that followed, I cannot attempt a detailed description. By the afternoon, I was thoroughly exhausted, and had made up my mind to see no more, when, just as it was getting dusk, my servant came up to the drawing-room and informed me that such a nice-looking young lady was in the dining-room; quite the nicest that had been yet.

'Ask her to come up-stairs, then, Ellis; but do not admit any one else,' I replied; and the next minute the drawing-room door was thrown open by Ellis, and 'Miss Burke' announced.

She was dressed in mourning, and, even in the dim light, was, I could see, a pale-faced, rather handsome girl of apparently about four-and-twenty. Her height was over the average, but seemed greater from her extreme thinness, which struck me as almost startling. 'Good-evening,' she said, in a low and rather pleasant voice. 'I am afraid I am very late; it was so kind of you to see me.'

'It is late,' I assented, 'but that does not matter.'

'Thank you,' responded my visitor. 'I came about your advertisement—I saw you wanted a companion, and I am anxious to get a situation of the kind.'

'I have had so many applications to-day,' I answered, for want of something better to say.

'Ah! I can quite fancy it,' returned Miss Burke.

'I fear I am too late!'

'No,' I replied; 'I have seen no one yet to suit me.'

'If you would only try me, I should do my utmost to please you,' she said almost pleadingly. 'I have already been a companion, and I can give you references which may induce you to think of me;' and Miss Burke opened a small black velvet bag, which, until then, I had not perceived, and placed in my hands a monogrammed and coronetted epistle, addressed to herself, purporting to come from a Lady Montacute, whose companion she had been for two years, and who expressed herself in the warmest terms, assuring Miss Burke, whenever she returned from the continent, whither she was just then going, that it would give her the greatest pleasure to answer any inquiries in her favour; in the meantime, Lady Montacute authorised her to make what use she chose of the letter now sent,

ending by saying she was certain, wherever she went, Miss Burke must be a favourite and an acquisition.

Then followed a letter from a Rev. Mr White, from a remote rectory in Cumberland, stating that he had known Miss Emily Burke from her childhood, and could certify that she was not only desirable in all respects, but a most amiable and talented young lady, whose family were both well known and highly respected. Nothing could be more satisfactory; and after reading the two missives carefully by the light of the fire, I raised my eyes towards my visitor, whom I found regarding me in the most eager manner imaginable.

'They are most kind letters,' I said; 'and as far as references go, I am sure I could not do better. Your duties would be very light—it is really only for the sake of companionship that I require any one, as I do everything for myself, but I have been very lonely since my husband went away.'

'I can imagine it,' responded Miss Burke, sympathisingly. 'I should do my utmost to cheer you.' 'You are very kind to say so,' I answered. 'Should we agree as to terms, when could you come?'

'To-morrow, if you will permit me,' replied Miss Burke. 'I am in lodgings, and the expense of them is so great, I should only be too glad to give them up—I am very poor,' she added in a low tone.

I was sorry for the poor girl; and feeling I had been as prudent as possible in perusing her references, and trusting a good deal to her air of quiet respectability, I proceeded to state my terms, which were eagerly accepted. After a little conversation, all was settled, and my companion promised to make her appearance before luncheon on the following day. For the rest of that evening I was unusually meditative; I was pleased, and yet not pleased. She was not altogether my beau-ideal of a companion. Although ladylike, and with undeniable references, there was a certain awkwardness in her manner.

Her room was to be on the same floor with my own; and on the following morning I went in, a short time before she arrived, to see that everything was ready for her. It was October, and the weather was chilly, so I desired that she should have a fire, as I fancied, coming from wretched lodgings, it might be a sort of welcome to her. At one o'clock she arrived, bringing with her a small black box as her sole luggage, which Ellis and the housemaid, between them, carried directly to her room, whither she followed them almost immediately, to take off her things. I accompanied her, and remained for a few minutes, telling her to join me in the drawing-room as soon as she could, lunch being ready.

She presently appeared, very much altered by the removal of her bonnet. She wore her hair in a crop, a fashion I detested; and her figure without her cloak was only redeemed from awkwardness by the well-made black dress, which had evidently been the work of a first-rate *modiste*. She wore no ornaments, except a plain gold ring on the little finger of her left hand, which I noticed was particularly large. I ceased to criticise her after we had been together for a little. She was so pleasant, so chatty, and yet so quiet withal, that ere evening came I had begun to congratulate myself on my own perspicacity in

having engaged her, and was fully prepared to endorse Lady Montacute's opinion, that she was sure to be not only a favourite but an acquisition.

A fortnight slipped quietly away, and in my weekly budget to my husband I gave most charming accounts of my companion, which our everyday intercourse seemed fully to confirm. But about the third week, a something I could not explain made me take a dislike to her. I had not been very well, and her kindness had been unremitting; consequently, I felt almost angry with myself for indulging in a feeling which I could not help acknowledging was both unreasonable and childish.

But it gained ground in spite of myself; and one night, as I was standing by the looking-glass in my bedroom, which was in the shadow, I caught sight of Miss Burke, who was leaning on the mantelpiece in the full light of the gas, which burned on either side of it, regarding me with a stealthy and searching glance, which I instantly observed, but had sufficient sense to take no notice of. The expression in her large black eyes haunted me for days, and caused me to say good-night to her on the landing, and, in addition, to lock my door, a precaution I had never before thought of taking.

One night shortly afterwards I awoke, fancying I heard a movement outside my door. My room was perfectly dark, and I was convinced some noise had suddenly awakened me. I listened intently, almost too terrified to breathe, until I heard most distinctly the handle of my door cautiously turned. An almost death-like horror seized me, and for an instant I was absolutely rigid with terror; but the spell was broken by another audible effort to open the door, and the hall clock striking three, which made me spring up in bed, seize the matches, and, with trembling fingers, attempt two or three times to strike a light. At last I was successful, and the welcome blaze of the gas which I lit gave me courage to call out boldly: 'Who is there?' But no answer came. I pealed my bell vigorously, and in a few minutes I heard steps approaching, and Ellis's welcome voice asked if I was ill.

'No, Ellis, not ill,' I said, 'but terrified,' as I unlocked the door and admitted her. 'Some one tried my door not five minutes ago.'

'Tried your door, ma'am? surely not!' ejaculated Ellis.

'Yes, Ellis; I am certain of it, and it has given me such a shock. I cannot be left alone again.'

'What is the matter, dearest Mrs Conyers?' exclaimed Miss Burke, who appeared in my room just as I had made the last remark to Ellis.

'I have been frightened,' I answered; 'but do not disturb yourself, Miss Burke; it was probably nothing.'

'It could not have been anything, or I must have heard it,' she said, half to me and half to Ellis.

'Pray, do not trouble yourself,' I responded; 'I am only sorry you got up at all.'

She staid for a few minutes, but getting no encouragement to remain, returned to her own room, assuring me if she heard a sound she would be with me in a moment.

The instant she was safely gone, I turned to Ellis, desiring her in the first place to close and lock my door; and in the second, to prepare to remain with me until the morning; for I was so unbidden by the circumstance, trifling though it was, that to be left by myself was out of the question.

Ellis had been with me ever since my marriage, now three years, and had been well known to my husband's family all her life, consequently, I felt I might trust her, so I said: 'Ellis, I have my own suspicions; but we must do nothing until we are sure. Meanwhile, you must have a bed made up in this room, and we must watch'—

'Miss Burke?' whispered Ellis.

'Yes,' I replied; 'it was she who tried my door.'

'Well, ma'am,' confided Ellis, 'I have been downright afraid of her this some time back—civil-spoken though she is. But what could she want at your door?'

'That I do not know; but we may find out.'

By dint of a blanket off my bed, and sundry shawls, Ellis was made comfortable for the rest of the night on the sofa, and I returned to bed, not to sleep, for I was thoroughly upset, but to lie and wonder how I was ever to get through the ten months that still remained of my husband's absence.

Tired and unnerved, I met Miss Burke at breakfast, and we spent our morning in a very silent fashion. I wrote to my husband whilst she walked restlessly about the drawing-room, constantly asking me how I was, an inquiry for which I did not feel so grateful as I might have done under other circumstances. Lunch came, and afterwards Miss Burke, who was usually most unwilling to go out, asked me if I could spare her for the afternoon, as she wanted to go to see a sick friend.

'Certainly,' I replied, glad to get rid of her. About four o'clock I lay down on the sofa in the inner drawing-room, and must have fallen asleep, for I heard no one come into the room, but I awoke with the consciousness that some one was leaning over me with their face in close proximity to my own. I felt rather than saw them; so close were they to me that their lips seemed almost touching my own, and as I sprang up I came into violent collision with—my companion.

'Miss Burke!' I exclaimed indignantly, but I could say nothing more, for, after all, the crime of leaning over me was not of a deadly nature, though coupling it, as I instantly did, with my previous suspicions, I felt not only extremely angry, but considerably alarmed.

'I was afraid you were ill, dear Mrs Conyers. I do hope I have not displeased you,' she proceeded in a deprecating tone. 'I did not mean to offend you.'

'It is of no consequence,' I answered, rising from the sofa; 'but please do not do so again. I am nervous and easily startled.'

The circumstance was then tacitly dismissed, and we got through the evening pretty fairly. I rather looked forward to a safe night, for I knew Ellis's bed was in readiness for her. I said good-night a little earlier than usual to Miss Burke, but did not inform her that I had indited an epistle to her friend the Rev. Mr White, to ask for further particulars as to her antecedents.

I heard her come up to her room, and when her door closed, a feeling of compassion came over me, for I fancied I had not only unjustly suspected her, but been very cold in my manner, which she had evidently felt. Ellis came after I was in bed, and in a short time I had oral evidence that she was slumbering. It made me feel secure, at all events, though I was certain I should dream of all kinds of unearthly things if the snoring went on all night.

Nothing happened to alarm us, and, next morning, in a subdued and anxious voice, Miss Burke hoped I had not been disturbed, and that Ellis had kept me from feeling nervous—this last remark very reproachfully.

About twelve o'clock, when we were sitting in the drawing-room, Ellis came up and told me that a gentleman wanted to see me on business, but would not give his name. 'Probably about some subscription,' I observed; 'perhaps I had better see what he wants.'

Without a suspicion of what awaited me, I went down-stairs, and on entering the dining-room encountered a short and rather red-faced man, who, bowing profoundly, asked if I was Mrs Conyers. On my replying in the affirmative, he continued: 'May I ask what establishment you have?'

I must have looked astonished, as he explained:

'I am a detective police-officer, madam, and my business here will, I am afraid, be an unpleasant one.'

'Indeed!' I ejaculated; 'in what way?'

'From information I have received, I believe you have a person under your roof who is wanted on a very serious charge. I must ask your permission to summon every one in the house into this room. I have taken precautions to prevent any one leaving it, and if you will kindly accede to my request, I shall get over a painful duty as quickly as possible.'

If my lips had been capable of utterance, the words they would have framed would have been 'Miss Burke,' but I said nothing. I merely rang the bell, which Ellis answered so promptly, I felt certain she must have been behind the door, ready to protect me, in case of an emergency.

'Summon the servants, Ellis,' I said; 'and, and—ask Miss Burke to come down-stairs.' It was almost like a dream to me, seeing my four domestics walk in; and then—suspecting nothing—came Miss Burke.

'Got you at last, sir!' cried the detective, making an agile dart towards my companion.

'Not without some trouble,' coolly responded his prisoner, whose courage was apparently quite equal to the occasion. In my wildest moments I had never dreamed of so desperate a dénouement, and the discovery perfectly paralysed me with horror. It was too dreadful to realise that I had harboured a wretch of a man in woman's clothing not only in my house, but in the capacity of my companion! In less time than I can describe it in, the detective and his prisoner had departed; it was quietly and quickly managed; and though a detailed account of it did appear in the papers, my name was, happily for me, not allowed to transpire publicly.

The pseudo Miss Burke turned out to be a notorious young man, or I may say lad, of the name of Browning, who, having embezzled large sums, as well as stolen a quantity of magnificent jewellery, had been unable, owing to the precautions taken to prevent his doing so, to leave London, or to dispose of his stolen property. Through the agency of a female friend, he had adopted his disguise, and my unlucky advertisement had suggested to him the idea of insuring his own safety, should I be credulous enough to take him upon the recommendations, which, I need hardly say, had emanated from his own pen. Not only had he thought of his personal security, but that of the stolen

goods, which, in the shape of diamonds and bank-notes, were found securely stowed away in the little black box, which I had thought contained the worldly possessions of my poverty stricken companion. He was tried, convicted, and sentenced to penal servitude for fourteen years.

My husband's return was hastened by the illness which the dreadful affair caused me. Since then, he and I have never been separated. However, should I ever be unavoidably left alone again, my past experience has decided me on one point—never to advertise, or to trust to written references, or the result may be—A Curious Companion.

DEEP-SEA EXPLORATIONS.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER II.

AFTER being visited and inspected by some of the Lords of the Admiralty, the Hydrographer (under whose directions the *Challenger* had been prepared), the Council and several Fellows of the Royal Society—the whole of whom were satisfied that everything had been done that practical foresight could suggest—the *Challenger* left Sheerness on the 6th of December, and, by way of a test of her preparedness, at once encountered a storm in the Channel, which caused the loss of a boat, and did other trifling damage, but proved the stability and sea-going qualities of the ship. After repairing damages at Portsmouth, the expedition finally left our shores on the 21st of December, and again encountered a heavy south-west gale, which effectually settled things into their places; but although the movable material, in the shape of crockery, chairs, &c., suffered, as is always the case under the same circumstances, not the slightest injury occurred to any of the delicate and fragile instruments, of which there were so many and great a variety on board, so well were they secured.

Until the 30th, the weather did not admit of sounding; but as the ground over which the ship passed had been well examined, it was not of much consequence. On that day, however, when off the coast of Portugal, the first deep sounding was taken in one thousand one hundred and twenty-five fathoms; but by the line being carried away, all proof of the sounding was lost, and, what was of more consequence, a deep-sea thermometer. The dredge was then put over, and considerable excitement was felt in the first haul. The disappointment when it came to the surface upside down, with, of course, nothing in it, may be imagined; but a second trial proved more successful, and great was the rejoicing over a full bag, containing many bright-coloured star-fishes, and a fine specimen of the *goustrypz*.

On the 2d of January a sounding was obtained in one thousand nine hundred and seventy-five fathoms, but again the line was carried away, and another thermometer lost; and once more the dredge was unfortunate, for it either fouled a rock or the Lisbon and Gibraltar cable; and after seven hours' hard work in the attempt to clear it, the line parted. These failures were disappointments of the moment, but they were not unexpected, as it was well known that some practice would be required to sound and dredge in such depths, with a ship the size of the *Challenger*, before success could be insured; and, indeed, it was soon found

necessary to alter the method of sounding from that which had been practised in smaller vessels. In the smaller vessels, a derrick had been used, which swung over the side, the accumulators being arranged with the upright of the derrick; in the *Challenger*, the accumulators were attached to a pendant at the main yard-arm, and a block to the lower end of the accumulators, through which block the sounding or dredge line was rove. The great advantage of this method was, that it kept the line well clear of the ship; and as, through the greater immersion of the larger ship, she was more readily acted on by currents, still the ship could be kept better over the line, by having it more distant from her side.

On the 3d of January, the *Challenger* entered the Tagus, and anchored off the city of Lisbon, and those who were unaccustomed to the confinement of a ship, were right glad to be on *terra firma* once more. Parties were organised to visit all the places of interest—Cintra, the beautiful monastery and church of Santa Maria of Belem, the Botanic Garden and Natural History Museum, relative to all of which we shall doubtless become better acquainted than we ever have been, when the narrative of the voyage of the *Challenger* becomes *un fait accompli*.

As the king, Dom Luis I., expressed a wish to visit the ship, every preparation was made to receive him with due honour; and although his visit lacked the usual thundering broadside salute of guns, he was nevertheless well pleased with his less noisy reception. His majesty quite entered into the spirit of his entertainers, as they explained to him the various processes of sounding and dredging. After obtaining observations for setting the chronometers, and comparing the magnetic instruments brought from England with those at the Magnetic Observatory, the expedition sailed, or rather steamed to sea, on the 12th.

The dredge having been found to bring up a great quantity of unprofitable mud, which took long in washing and sifting, it was decided to try the trawl. Accordingly, in six hundred fathoms, off Cape St Vincent, the trawl, with a beam fifteen feet long, was let down, and, to the great delight of the naturalists, it proved most successful. Many star-fishes of beautiful colours were brought up, and some delicate zoophytes; some fishes were also netted, and these presented a most extraordinary appearance, caused by their bodies being suddenly relieved from the enormous pressure to which they had been subjected; they appeared swollen almost to bursting, whilst the eyes protruded like globes from the head. Several specimens were also obtained of the beautiful *Euplectella*, or Venus's flower-basket, specimens of which, from the Philippine Islands, are now becoming common in England.

Eight days were spent at Gibraltar, and on the 26th January, the ship left for Madeira, but did not make a straight course for that island, it being necessary to continue a section of soundings on the line between Lisbon and Madeira. When only seventy miles from Cape St Vincent, a depth of two thousand five hundred fathoms, or about three miles, was found. A hundred miles farther west, the depth was one thousand five hundred fathoms; and as there is still shoaler water beyond, it is surmised that a deep submarine basin exists, following the chain from the Black Sea and

Mediterranean, with its outlet between the Canary Islands and Madeira.

As the weather was fine, some very successful trawling was made, and several rare specimens obtained from depths exceeding two thousand fathoms.

The arrival at Madeira on the 3d February was a treat, especially to those who had not visited the island before. The contrast with England in December is very marked: the rich foliage of the almost tropical plants, the gardens in a state of great luxuriance, the perfume of myrtles and magnolias—have a charm not easily described. The banana, coffee, pomegranate, sugar-cane, and other tropical plants, were found growing in profusion; but the one that renders the island so famous, the vine, is nowhere to be seen in the neighbourhood of Funchal.

The most was made of the two days allotted for the stay at Madeira, and on the 5th the *Challenger* steamed away for Tenerife, and anchored off Santa Cruz. Here the change was again very great; the almost tropical splendour of Madeira gives place in Tenerife, at a very short distance inland, to a country remarkably wild and barren, with abrupt precipitous rocks and deep ravines, and but few hardy plants and cacti to be seen. A party was organised to ascend the peak; and had succeeded in getting about nine thousand feet above the sea-level, when the guides refused to proceed farther, and the travellers were reluctantly obliged to return.

On the 14th February, the expedition left Santa Cruz, and the real work of the voyage commenced in an oceanic section between the Canary Islands and Sombbrero, a distance of two thousand six hundred miles. In the evening, the snow-white summit of the Peak of Tenerife was clearly seen in the bright moonlight; and at daylight, the island was dimly descried in the distance. The first sounding of the section was then obtained, the bottom being reached with one thousand nine hundred fathoms of line. Several observations on the temperature at different depths were commenced. This is effected by attaching a thermometer near the sinker of a carefully marked line; another, as the line sinks, at an interval of a hundred fathoms, and so on. By this process the temperature of each stratum of water, so to speak, can be ascertained. After allowing the thermometers time to take up the temperature at the depths they have severally reached, the line is carefully hove in, and every precaution taken to prevent unnecessary jarring or jerking, which is apt to displace the indicators. As each successive thermometer comes to the surface, it is removed with care, and its indications at once recorded, together with the number of the instrument, its error, and other circumstances under which the observation has been made: when the last thermometer is in, the operation is repeated, until the series is completed.

As regards the process of dredging, when the ship has reached a position at which it is desirable to sound or dredge, the steam is got up, the sails are furled, and, when the operation is completed, sail is again made for the next position. But it frequently occupies from nine to twelve hours in obtaining and recording all the observations necessitated by a single haul. Hours of very dirty work are spent in washing and sifting the mud brought

up by the dredge, and frequently with but little result; but the arrival of one stranger is hailed by all on board with delight, and the hours of disagreeable labour in obtaining it, forgotten.

A careful and minute record was kept of the ship's daily work, every particular of interest alike to the naturalist, the philosopher, and the sailor being noted. From the *Challenger's* sounding record, kept while the ship's course lay between Tenerife and Sombbrero, we make a few extracts. Beginning with February 15, we find the ship sounding in 1890 fathoms, in latitude $27^{\circ} 24'$ north, by $16^{\circ} 55'$ west longitude; upon that day, the specimen of bottom consisted of ooze, or sediment composed of the bodies of countless myriads of deceased Globigerina animalcules. At the bottom, the registering thermometer shewed a temperature of 35.6° Fahrenheit. Following the ship's course, we find that, on the 18th, the lead struck rock at a depth of 1525 fathoms; and upon the following day, in 2220 fathoms, the line parted. From the 20th till the 28th, between latitude $24^{\circ} 20'$ and $23^{\circ} 10'$, and longitude $24^{\circ} 28'$ and $38^{\circ} 42'$, the average depth attained was 2600 fathoms, the tube bringing up red clay, and the thermometer registering about 35.6° . On March 3, the lead again touched rock in 2025 fathoms; while subsequent soundings, extending to the 14th of the month, shewed the bottom to consist partly of Globigerina deposit, and partly of red clay.

On the 24th February, the *Challenger* was fairly in the tropics, with a balmy atmosphere, clear sky, sparkling sea, and flying-fish shooting from crest to crest of the waves. On the 26th, the deepest dredging that was ever attempted was successfully accomplished, and about a hundred-weight of mud brought from 3150 fathoms. On the 2d March, the first patches of the beautiful Gulf or Sargasso weed was passed, and flying-fish became abundant. On the 4th, an animal was brought up in the tangles attached to the dredge which gave the naturalists great delight. It resembled a small lobster, and was particularly interesting, from the total absence of eye-stalks. This evening, in honour, we presume, of the new discovery, Professor Thomson gave an interesting lecture to the ship's company, 'On some of the Causes which had led to fitting out this Expedition, and what had already been attained; and as the learned professor, in his explanation, adapted himself to the capacity of his hearers, he had a most attentive audience; and Jack unwittingly took in more science than he ever believed himself capable of containing, and felt not a little satisfied in knowing how much he had contributed to the success of what he heard so vividly described.

On the 14th March, Sombbrero Island was sighted, and, two days after, the *Challenger* anchored in the harbour of St Thomas.

St Thomas bears an ill repute with Europeans; hurricanes, earthquakes, and yellow fever do not convey an agreeable impression; but the place is very much maligned in regard to the frequency of all these evils. Those in the *Challenger* found none of the plagues, but peacefully and in health completed the refitting of the vessel, coaling, and taking in supplies.

On the evening of the 24th March, the expedition left St Thomas for Bermuda, but before proceeding directly north, obtained some soundings and dredgings in the vicinity of the island. In

doing this on one occasion, the dredge fouled in the rocky bottom, and before the ship could be brought up to relieve the strain, the spar, with the leading block, gave way, and killed a boy. The dredging was most successful, and a large quantity of sponges, star-fishes, &c. was obtained. Sail was then made towards Bermuda.

The first sounding after leaving the islands, and when only about eighty miles from them, proved to be the deepest that the *Challenger* had obtained—nearly four miles; and as that great depth was unexpected so near the land, only three hundred-weight of sinkers were attached to the line, instead of four hundredweight, the usual quantity in great depths. They took nearly an hour and a quarter to get to the bottom, and two hours were employed in heaving the line in; the sinkers, of course, being left at the bottom. The two thermometers sent down were broken by the enormous pressure, which at that depth was equal to about 710 atmospheres, or 13,650 pounds to the square inch. The dredge was then lowered, and some very fine sand brought up; the quantity of rope used in dredging in this enormous depth was 4400 fathoms, or five miles. When the sounding, dredging, and serial temperatures were completed, the body of the poor fellow killed the day before was committed, with that beautiful and touching ceremonial used in a ship at sea, to the deepest of known graves. The death and burial of the lad cast a gloom throughout the ship that was not easily shaken off.

On the 1st April, the weather being fine, boats were lowered, and the naturalists with their gauze tow-nets gathered a fine harvest; the sea-weed collected from the surface was found teeming with life. On the 4th, the *Challenger* anchored in Grassy Bay, Bermuda.

At Bermuda, the ship was again partially refitted and coaled; and whilst this was being done, the naturalists worked at their several specialties, seeking in every crack and cranny of the rocks for plants and animals; and all enjoyed the beautiful miniature scenery of the islands, and also the hospitality of the governor, General Lefroy.

On leaving Bermuda on the morning of the 21st, a number of soundings were taken round the group of islands, which proved that they were on an isolated peak rising abruptly from a very small base. Observations were also made on the sub-currents; but the difficulties attending the elimination of data were so great, that the results must still remain a vexed question. When these operations were completed, a course was shaped towards New York.

On the 29th, although it was desirable to sound, it was found impracticable, the sea being so short and heavy; the attempt was made, but a blow on the rudder, by a sea, broke the wheel-ropes. The sounding on the 30th was near the southern edge of the Gulf Stream.

Being in the middle of the Gulf Stream on the 1st of May, every preparation was made for sounding, and four hundredweight of sinkers were attached to the line; but no sooner was the line let go, than the strong current of the stream set the ship away at the rate of three miles an hour; and on her steaming up at that rate to counteract the set, the bight of the line was carried astern. After several ineffectual attempts, they were obliged to give it up, with the loss of eighteen hundred fathoms of line. From some serial tem-

peratures obtained, it was clear that the Gulf Stream is very superficial at this point, for the water rapidly cooled below one hundred fathoms, shewing that the Labrador current was commingling with the warmer water from the southward.

Having reached a position about one hundred and thirty miles from New York, the course was changed for Halifax, where the ship arrived on the 9th of May, and left again on the 19th.

The sounding on the 23d was taken near a bank supposed to have but forty fathoms water on it. The current of the Gulf Stream was not so strong on this section, and bottom was obtained in two thousand eight hundred fathoms; the warm water was found to extend only to the depth of fifty fathoms. On the 26th, in taking serial temperatures, the heavy loss of seven deep-sea thermometers was incurred; the line to which they were attached got between the rudder and the stern-post, and broke before it could be cleared. A few days after, they had the misfortune to lose a trawl and two miles of good rope, by the trawl getting jammed in the rocks. The *Challenger* again anchored in Bermuda on the 30th.

After refitting and coaling, the expedition set forth on a return section across the Atlantic to the Azores.

Nothing particular happened on the voyage, excepting that, at two-thirds of the way across, a small turtle, which had evidently got out of its latitude, was captured; it was covered with barnacles and small crabs.

On the 30th, at daylight, the Peak of Pico was seen, and the *Challenger* anchored in Horta Bay, Fayal; but as small-pox was raging in the island, she left without communicating, and proceeded to San Miguel.

The voyagers give glowing accounts of the beauty of San Miguel. A party was formed to visit the Val das Furnas, a valley of boiling springs, situated near the eastern end of the island, and about eighteen miles from Punta Delgada. The trip was greatly enjoyed by all. This island is worthy of being more frequently visited by our yachtsmen than it has been; and as a breakwater is in course of construction, which will give good shelter to vessels, it will probably soon become better known and appreciated.

Leaving San Miguel on the 9th July, the *Challenger* reached Madeira on the 16th.

Small-pox again drove our voyagers from this island, and the ship left for Cape Verde Islands, and anchored at St Vincent on the 27th July, remaining there until the 5th August; during this time the ship was completed with coal, and a survey made of the anchorage; few supplies were obtained, there having been but little rain on the island for three years. On the plains, the grass was completely parched, and numerous skeletons of goats and other animals were met with.

A sub-lieutenant joined the ship here from England, and a seaman schoolmaster was also expected to meet the ship on her arrival; he had reached the island before the *Challenger*, and had taken up his quarters at the hotel. One afternoon, he left for a walk, and did not return; and as the next day passed without tidings of him, the landlord informed the authorities and the English consul; when search was made for him, without success. As he had left his desk open, with a letter partly written on it, in which there was nothing to cause

the supposition that he had meditated suicide, a reward was offered, under the impression that he had been murdered. On the arrival of the *Challenger*, Captain Nares increased the reward offered, but in vain. After the *Challenger* left, the body of the poor fellow was found in the mountains; and as his watch and purse were on him, it is supposed that he had ascended the hills to look for his ship, and had either lost his way on returning, or had fallen from weakness, and died.

From the 7th to the 9th August, the ship was at Porto Praya, St Jago Island, and here they obtained a fair supply of beef, vegetables, and fruit. The pinnacle was sent to dredge over a spot on which, it was said, pink coral was to be found; but only a few specimens of the real coral, similar to that found in the Mediterranean, were procured; but it was noticed that the temperature at eighty fathoms—namely, fifty-two degrees—was the same as in the coral-bearing districts of the Mediterranean; and the conclusion from this is, that in other localities favourable for its growth, coral of a like kind may be found where the same temperature exists.

WALTER'S WORD.

CHAPTER XXXV.—THE CAVERN.

WHEN Walter left the camp with his two companions, the sun was high in the heavens, and poured down its rays upon a magnificent landscape of wood and mountain, but one which was without a trace of cultivation; not a road was visible in any direction, nor did they come across any pathway, save such as the goats frequented, and which was used by the sure-footed brigands with equal facility. Lofty as was their position, their route still lay upwards, and the summit of the mountain was still hid from their view to the east and north, in which latter quarter, as Walter supposed, lay the sea. He cast his keen eyes hither and thither in hopes of a landmark, and presently, upon his right, rose Etna, its crown of snow shining in the morning light, as though it were one jewel. Colletta, who was walking behind him, marked the quick direction of his glance, and called out to his companion, who instantly stopped, and produced from his pocket a long shawl. He had a dozen pockets, at least, in various parts of his clothing; some for his jewellery, some for his food, some for his ammunition; while the flaps of his shooting-jacket, more voluminous than those of an English poacher, could easily have held not only a hare but a goat. Santoro's manner was so stern, and even truculent, upon exhibiting this unlooked-for commodity, that for an instant Walter imagined that he was about to be strangled *à la Turk*, with a shawl instead of a bowstring, and he drew back a pace mechanically.

'It is useless to make resistance,' said Santoro coldly. 'We have our orders, and must obey them; it is necessary that the signor should be blindfolded.'

'Blindfolded!' echoed Walter; the thought of being shot with his eyes bandaged, suggested by what he had read of military executions, at once occurring to his mind. 'No; you may shoot as I am, and be hanged to you.' This was an illogical speech, since, if the brigands had intended to take his life without his seeing them, it was obvious

they might have done it fifty times over, by simply shooting him from behind; but then the conditions were not favourable for pure logic.

'We mean you no harm, signor,' explained Santoro; 'but the captain does not choose that you should know the way to our cavern up yonder;' and he pointed eastward with his finger.

'But it isn't in Mount Etna, is it?' inquired Walter, smiling, 'or I shall have to walk a long way with my eyes shut.'

'That hill yonder is not Etna, signor,' returned the brigand calmly; and then, with his companion's assistance, he proceeded to bind the shawl twice and thrice over the upper part of their prisoner's face, like a turban which has slipped a few inches down. Walter knew that the brigand had lied to him concerning Etna, and made up his mind to detect, if possible, the direction in which they were about to proceed. But this was at once rendered impossible by the simple precaution which children use in blindman's-buff. They turned him round and round three times; then each taking an arm, they led him away, at first down hill, probably retracing their steps, to confuse him, and then again up hill, till the fatigue and heat incident upon his constrained motion and bandaged head became almost insupportable. At last, they came to what appeared to be high level ground with trees, to judge by the coolness and the breeze upon it, and here they halted. Then the brigand call was given, and returned, as it seemed, from close at hand; a few minutes of waiting, during which he heard a grinding noise, as of stone on stone, and then he was bidden to stoop his head, and follow Santoro, who guided him by his hand. Half-a-dozen paces of cautious walking, during which his disengaged fingers were bruised against what seemed a rocky passage; the grinding noise was heard again, and then a wave of cool salt air broke gratefully upon his mouth and cheek. Santoro had let go his hand, so that he dared not move, since, for aught he knew, he was at the summit of some dizzy precipice; but if his sense of hearing could be trusted, there was a woman's cry of welcome, and then kisses. These lasted for a considerable interval, during which he stood with bowed head and blinded eyes, doubtless in a very ridiculous position; then a woman's smothered laugh broke tinkling out, and Santoro cried: 'A thousand pardons, signor; I had quite forgotten that you were still stooping: you can now hold up your head.'

'But can I take off the bandage?'

'In one moment, signor;' but there was more kissing, and a whispered word or two, and a sound like a slapped cheek, before the shawl was loosened and he was permitted to look about him.

The scene that saluted Walter's dazzled eyes was very surprising. He found himself in a vast cavern, the arch of which, so far from endangering his head, was fifty feet above it; huge stalactites, on which the sunbeams shone, and gave to them the brightness of lit chandeliers, depended from the roof; while the sides of the cave, notwithstanding it was dry and warm, were lined with luxuriant creepers. The floor, a sparkling sand, which would have competed with salt for whiteness, was soft and noiseless to the feet as thick-piled carpet. Of windows this noble chamber could not boast; but through a vast natural opening—by which the light and air were at present freely admitted, but

could be excluded at will by a mat-curtain—the blue sea could be seen far as eye could reach. The sight of it was almost like liberty itself to Walter, and for an instant his gaze rested on it with thankful joy, to the neglect of other objects; then it lit on a young lad, more smartly dressed than any of his late companions on the mountain, but the knife and pistol in whose belt proclaimed him to follow the same lawless trade; he leant against the opposite wall, with his eyes fixed on the sand, and was apparently unconscious of a stranger's presence.

'Why, where is Santoro gone,' inquired Walter, 'and—and—the lady?'

'Santoro will return in a moment, signor,' murmured the lad. The soft gentle voice struck Walter as familiar, but it was the tell-tale blush upon the cheek, and the shy glance of the eye, which disclosed to him that he was addressing a female.

'Oh, I see,' cried he with some awkwardness; 'you are Lavocca.'

'Yes, signor.' He wondered now how, despite her brigand attire, he could have ever taken her for a boy, so feminine were her looks and tone. It was evident that the mention of her name had revealed to her that he was acquainted with Santoro's love for her, and that the knowledge overwhelmed her with confusion. She stood swaying her foot upon the sand, and playing with the pistol in her dainty sash, as though it had been a flower which she would have picked to pieces. For a Sicilian, she was almost a blonde, and a very pretty one; her hair curled in profusion about her ears and temples, but descended no lower, forbidden, doubtless, to do so by the brigand code; her mouth, though weak in its expression, was a very charming one, and no man who desired to be her husband would probably have wished it stronger.

'But what on earth has become of Santoro?' repeated Walter with curiosity. 'His fingers untied this shawl but one minute ago, and now he has vanished?'

'He is here,' said Lavocca, interrupting, 'and the young signora with him.'

'The signora!' cried Walter, turning eagerly round, and expecting to behold no other than Lillian herself.

'That is the name by which my people honour me,' said a grave sweet voice; 'but I am plain Joanna, sister of Rocco Corrali, at your service.'

The speaker was a tall and strikingly handsome girl—so tall, that even in her male costume her height did not appear insignificant. Her hair, which was quite short and straight, except for a tiny curl at each ear, which had a charming effect, was black and glossy as a crow's wing; her eyes were also black as blackest coal, and though mild and maidenly in their present expression, could perhaps, like coal, give forth flame upon occasion; while her complexion, which had once, doubtless, been olive, like that of the majority of her fellow-countrywomen, had become, by exposure to the sun and wind, of a deep walnut. In woman's clothes, she would probably have looked coarse; but in her jacket, braided with silver buttons, and tied at the waist with a rich scarlet scarf, her full trousers of blue cloth, and small though thick-soled boots, she was as bewitching a figure as ever stepped before the footlights.

It was not in the young painter's nature to have refused admiration to so picturesque an object, and besides, he reflected that Lillian was in this woman's power, and that it behoved him to conciliate her by all the arts he knew. I am afraid, therefore, that he affected to be even more struck by this lady's appearance than he really was, and allowed a certain respectful homage to be perceived in his looks and tone as he addressed her, which were not wholly genuine.

'I am come, signora, from your brother, with a message to the young lady under your protection, as Santoro here' (for the brigand had returned with Joanna) 'has doubtless informed you.'

'Is she a relative of yours?' inquired Joanna in a careless tone, but with a certain quickness of manner that did not escape Walter's notice. He was no coxcomb, but if his appearance had made a favourable impression upon this Amazon, it was his interest—and that of another—to improve it.

'No, signora.'

'Oh, indeed. Then, may I ask how it happens that you have been sent hither instead of her father?'

'Well, for one thing, Mr Brown could only speak English; and it seems that it is contrary to your custom to allow a prisoner who is about to leave you?'

'How do you know she is about to leave us? I mean, how did my brother know?' interrupted Joanna haughtily. 'The lady is in my hands, not his.'

'I know nothing of that, signora,' answered Walter deferentially, 'being, alas, but a captive myself. I am only your brother's mouth-piece. A very large sum has been agreed upon as our ransom, and that cannot be procured unless the young lady applies to the banker in person. I understood, too, that she was far from well, and to an invalid—however admirably such quarters may agree, as one can see they do, with one like yourself, in health—these open-air lodgings must needs be hurtful.'

'The young lady is well lodged enough, as you shall presently see for yourself,' answered Joanna: 'the air that is here admitted so freely'—and she stepped towards the orifice of the cave, while Lavocca gave place to her, and stole to where Santoro was standing, at the other end of the apartment—is shut out from our inner room. And what was the other reason which you were about to say brought you here?' continued Joanna, dropping her voice, so that Walter alone could hear her. 'Was it curiosity to behold, before you returned to your friends, a woman outlawed and unsexed; the companion, and even the leader of outlaws; one who, while still a girl in years, had forgotten not only how to love, but how to pity?' The words were spoken with bitterness, but the look that accompanied the words was far from bitter; it was remonstrant, and almost pleading.

'Indeed, signora, you misjudge me: it was no mere curiosity that brought me here; and if it had been so, I should have expected to see no such being as you describe, for I have heard no such account of her.'

'Then what sort of person did you expect to see?'

'A young girl, whom the tyranny of circumstances had driven to a mode of life that is indeed to be deplored, but who, while embracing it, has

given proofs of kindness and generosity, which would have adorned a far more enviable position.'

'Your informant,' answered Joanna, sighing, but evidently greatly pleased, 'must, I am afraid, have been Santoro yonder, who has his special reasons, as we see, for currying favour with the mistress of Lavocca.'

'He could not have known that I should quote him, signora, since I heard his account of you long before my coming here was arranged. I am well convinced, since the face is the index of the mind, that his praise was well deserved.'

'Ah, signor, you have not seen me in one of my passions,' said Joanna naively. 'We Sicilians are not like your English misses—so quiet, so gentle, like this one in yonder room. But I perceive you are impatient to see her. Come with me, sir.'

Joanna's voice had suddenly altered; her tones, which had been almost tender, became cold and stern. Her very figure had changed; for, whereas she had been leaning against the curtain, and partly hidden in the shadow of it, in an attitude of graceful ease, she now drew herself up, like a soldier on parade, and led the way across the cavern with quick determined tread.

Close behind where Santoro and Lavocca were now standing in earnest but low-toned talk, and where Walter himself had stood, till, at a sign from Joanna, he had changed his place, was a sort of recess in the wall of the cave: it was dark, and apparently of small extent, but, at the touch of Walter's companion, what seemed to be rock, but was, in fact, a door, rudely painted in imitation of it, opened without noise, and revealed a second apartment, smaller than the first, but furnished like an ordinary room. There were chairs and a table in it; a thick carpet covered the floor; instead of plants and ferns, the walls were hung with the same kind of matting of which the curtain in the outer cave had been composed. It was lighted, like its fellow, by an orifice that looked seaward, but to west instead of north, and which could be closed at pleasure by a wooden shutter. Close beside it, and yet sheltered from the draught, was a rude couch, covered with rugs and cushions, upon which lay a female form.

'The young lady is asleep,' said Joanna softly.

Walter's limbs trembled beneath him, as he bent down to gaze upon the unhappy Lilian. Her eyes were closed, but there were traces of tears upon her pale cheek, in the centre of which there burned a hectic spot of fever; he could hardly recognise her for even the invalid he had seen carried up and down the Marina. 'Great Heaven, how ill she looks!' was his smothered ejaculation.

'She has suffered from alarm and fatigue,' observed Joanna coldly; 'she has been distressed, too, about the safety of her friends. It will doubtless do her good to see you.'

'Would you be kind enough to break it to her that I am here?' said Walter, stepping back a pace. 'She is not aware that I have been taken captive, nor even of my presence in Sicily. The sudden shock might do her harm.'

'One is not killed by unexpected happiness,' returned Joanna, 'or at least so I have been told by those who have experienced it; but, nevertheless, I will do your bidding. Who shall I say has come? You are not a relative, it seems. Shall I say that it is her betrothed?'

'I am not her betrothed,' answered Walter gravely.

'But you hope to be so,' returned the other quickly. 'I read it in your face.'

'Indeed, I have no hope of the sort, signora,' was Walter's calm reply. He did not feel it necessary to explain to her why he had none; but he had spoken the literal truth. Not only was the difference of their fortunes as insurmountable as heretofore (for he was well convinced that Mr Brown could pay his ransom and yet remain a wealthy man), but there was that in Lilian's look which foreshadowed to him that she would live to be the bride of no man. 'I am her friend, and her father's friend, and that is all. My name is Walter Litton.'

Joanna approached the couch, and placed her hand softly upon Lilian's own. She awoke at once with a start.

'Is papa here?' cried she excitedly.

'Your father is not here, but a friend has come to see you.'

'A friend? Alas! I have no friend except my father.'

'He calls himself so, at all events; he has brought some news for you, but you must not talk of it in English, else you cannot see him.'

'In English! Is he, then, an Englishman?'

'Yes; his name is Walter Litton.'

'Walter!' A low weak cry, in which surprise and tenderness were strangely mingled, escaped her pale lips.

'I am here, Lilian,' said Walter, coming forward, and holding out his hand. 'Do not excite yourself; I bring you good tidings.'

'But how came you here?' She retained his hand in hers, but closed her eyes after one glance of grateful recognition.

'It is a long story, which there is no time to tell you now. Let it suffice that I have been taken captive with your father.'

'Ah, you risked, then, your life for mine.' These words came from the heart, and, like the rest, were spoken in her native tongue.

'You must not speak English,' broke in Joanna.

'Pardon her, signora; it will not occur again,' said Walter. 'She fears that her father's life is menaced.—No, Lilian; he will regain his liberty, if only the ransom which he has agreed to give can be procured. The authorisation for its payment, which you will present at Gordon's bank, is here'—he placed it in her hand. 'When once the money has been received, he will be free.'

'And you?' In those two words were expressed all the tenderest emotions of which a woman's heart is capable. Walter felt that she was aware at once of all that he had believed, contrived, and endured for her sake, from the moment of their last parting.

'I shall be free also in a day or two, at furthest; when we shall be sent back in safety to Palermo. Our only anxiety is, indeed, upon your account. Do not fret yourself as respects us. It is the thought of your condition—the trials, the hardships to which you have been exposed—that wrings your father's heart. Do you feel that you have strength enough to return to the city, where your sister's loving tendance awaits you?—Signora'—here he turned to Joanna—'you said something a while ago of this poor lady being your prisoner, to be dealt with according to your own good pleasure;

but I am well convinced that you will not refuse your brother's wish that she should be set free at once. You see how weak and ill she is. To keep her here, would be to kill her.'

'And what then?' whispered Joanna in his ear.

'Why, then, I should say, that what some folks have said of you (as you told me) was only too true: that you were a woman unsexed, and without a heart.'

'You would be wrong,' answered she, in the same low tones, but without the harshness that had accompanied her previous words. 'Even if I acted as you suggest, I should have a justification. This girl is nothing to me, nay, perhaps worse than nothing. Still, for your sake, here her voice became low and soft, 'all shall be as you wish; she shall be carried to Palermo this very day.'

'Lilian,' cried Walter joyfully, 'the signora has promised to set you free at once; before to-night you will be clasped in your sister's arms! Let that thought give you strength and courage.'

'I will do my best, Walter,' answered Lilian feebly; 'but my brain seems on fire, and my limbs do not obey my will.'

'You hear her, signora!' pleaded Walter passionately. 'Oh, do not let a minute be lost in sending her where aid can be given to her!'

Joanna bowed her head, and glided from the room.

'I shall never see you more, Walter,' whispered Lilian.

'Yes, dearest, yes, you will,' answered he, falling on his knees beside her; 'we shall meet again, and you will once more be well and happy. Hush! she is returning.'

At that moment, Joanna entered, accompanied by Santoro and Lavocca. These two took up the couch, which was, indeed, but a litter upon trestles, and carried Lilian forth into the outer room. Walter would have followed, but Joanna made a sign to him to remain.

'You must stay here, signor,' said she authoritatively, 'or you would learn the secret of finding your way out of prison.'

'I have no desire to learn it,' answered he, truly enough, since his escape at such a time would probably have endangered the merchant's life.

'Ah, you are smooth of speech, Signor Inglese, but I mistrust such gallantry. You have deceived me once already.'

'Not willingly, signora; nor am I conscious of having done so.'

'What! not when you told me that you were not betrothed to that young girl, but only her father's friend! Is it usual, then, in your country for such "friends" to take leave of one another with kisses?'

'It is allowable,' answered Walter with solemnity, 'when we believe that we shall never see one another on earth again.'

'To be sure, that makes a difference,' observed Joanna thoughtfully. 'And I certainly agree with you that it is not probable that the young lady will be long lived.'

To this Walter answered nothing, for, indeed, to him it had seemed as though Lilian's motionless and almost inanimate form had been carried out but to be placed in a still narrower prison-house. He drew a chair to the table, and placing his elbows upon it, covered his face with his hands.

'You would be left alone with your grief,

Signor Litton?' said Joanna interrogatively, and laying her hand upon the door.

'Thank you, yes,' answered he, scarcely knowing what he said.

'Those are his first thanks,' observed she bitterly, as she left the room; 'thanks for my absence.' But if Walter heard her words, he did not heed them; he was picturing to himself the English burial-ground at Palermo, as he had seen it a few days ago, and wondering in what part of its beautiful garden-ground they would lay his Lilian.

CHAPTER XXXVI.—JOANNA.

'Come, signor, you must eat,' were the first words spoken, in kind and cheerful tones, that roused Walter from the stupor of sorrow into which Lilian's departure under such sad conditions had cast him. Joanna was standing by him, with a loaf of bread in one hand, and a bottle of wine in the other; she placed these upon the table, and then produced from a cupboard some cold kid and a pot of cream. This solicitude for his comfort did not fail to move the young fellow towards her. The hearts of all his sex are approachable through the palate, and in this case, Walter had every excuse for giving way to human weakness, for he was exceedingly hungry; moreover, he was not so imprudent as not to perceive the immense importance of making friends with the sister of the brigand chief; so he fell to on the viands with honest vigour.

'Have they starved you up in the mountains yonder?' inquired she, watching him with pleased surprise.

'They have not treated me so well as you do, signora. Allow me to congratulate you upon the contents of your cellar. Why, this is more like a liqueur than a wine!'

'It is *lacrymæ Christi*. The mayor of the village hereabouts is good enough to send us some at Easter-tide.'

'To send us some,' thought Walter, and he felt as the Black Knight might have done had he been more conscientious when the friar of Copmanhurst described how he got his venison.

'Do not imagine it is stolen,' laughed Joanna, reading his thoughts; 'we brigands are not the outlaws that you are inclined to imagine us. We have friends in higher places than you imagine; and as for the poor—when did you ever hear us spoken ill of by a poor man?'

Walter thought of his host on the Marina, confined to a few square miles of ground for life, because of Captain Corrali and Company, but he remained silent.

'I see you are determined to think ill of us,' said Joanna plaintively.

'I think ill of the trade, signora, I confess. See what it has done in my case.'

'Your "friend," the young lady, was ailing before she fell into our hands,' put in his companion quickly.

'I was not referring to her, signora, but to myself. Here am I—without any fault of my own, unless the being on a high-road at midnight is a fault—taken prisoner, and put in danger of my life'—

'I hope not: indeed, I could not smile if I thought it probable,' interrupted Joanna. 'You will pay some money, the loss of which you will

not feel, and will then be sent back again to your friends. Your few days of captivity will be an experience with which to entertain them, and amongst other things you will have to tell them is the account of how you met a horrid female creature in men's clothes, who lived in a cavern, and had no heart?

'Indeed, Joanna' (he had unconsciously dropped the 'signora'), I shall always speak of that incident in quite another way. It is no flattery to you to say that the only pleasant thing that has happened to me during my captivity has been my reception here; your abode and surroundings are a romance in themselves, the interest of which will not easily wear away; your unlooked-for kindness and hospitality I shall never forget; the only thing which distresses me about it is, that you, seeing what you might be, should be what you are.'

'I don't understand you, signor,' cried Joanna, her dark eyes glowing with sudden fire.

'Nay, I meant no offence; but to me it appears deplorable that one so fitted to adorn an honest home, beautiful enough for a princess, sound-hearted, generous'—

'That is because I let the signora go,' observed Joanna bitterly.

'No, indeed; that only shewed you to be womanly. To have retained her would have been cruel, and cruelty is not your nature. I say that it seems to me that, in leading the life you do, you throw yourself away; and in a little while, when the excitement of such a mode of existence begins to flag, you will bitterly repent your choice of it.'

'I had no choice,' said Joanna sullenly.

'You have it now, signora. When this unhappy business is over, you have only to come into Palermo, and I will answer for it that you have made a friend there who will provide for you a better future.'

'And who is that friend?' inquired Joanna, with her eyes fixed upon the ground.

'The young lady whom you have just set free: she has a grateful heart, and her father is a man of wealth.'

'I do not wish to be indebted to that young lady,' answered Joanna coldly. 'I would rather be a brigand than a beggar, in any case; and never would I beg of her. Let us cease to talk of my affairs, signor; they may appear to interest you now, but they will not do so a week hence. The memory of all your sex is very short; but that of a rich man like you for a poor girl like me—bah! he only thinks of her while he sees her.'

'You are making several mistakes at once, Joanna,' said Walter gravely. 'In the first place, I am as poor as you are, probably poorer. I should be totally unable to pay even the small sum your brother fixed upon as the price of my freedom, but that he has permitted Mr Brown's ransom to cover mine.'

'You are, however, the betrothed of this rich man's daughter.'

'I again declare to you that such is not the fact; my poverty would, in any case, forbid such an alliance. I am but a penniless painter; this sketch-book is my cheque-book, and Nature the only bank from which I draw my income.'

'Is this really true, sir?' asked Joanna, regarding him with a steady gaze.

'Do I look so false that it is impossible to believe my words?' returned Walter, smiling.

'O no; you look true enough; and you take no vows to the saints, which is also a good sign,' answered Joanna naively; 'but still I cannot believe you. An Englishman, and poor! That is incredible.'

'And yet there are a good many of them in that condition, I do assure you,' said Walter, smiling.

'Well, let me prove you. You say you are an artist—one who makes his living by his pencil; if it be so, draw me.'

'With the greatest pleasure, signora.'

'Do not fear that it will be lost time,' continued she eagerly; 'I have plenty of ducats.'

'Nay, nay; I will not take your portrait except for love—that is, for nothing.'

'What! you call love nothing?'

'No, indeed; that is only our English phrase. The light here, however, is not so good for drawing as in the other apartment. Let us go in there.'

She led the way at once into the larger chamber, which was empty.

'Ah! this is kind of you,' continued Walter. 'You have allowed Lavocca to accompany your late captive on her journey.'

'I thought it would please you that she should have a female escort as far as the next village,' replied Joanna. 'My four men are her bearers, so you have only to kill me to obtain your freedom.'

'But, in the meantime, you have only to shoot me with one of your pistols.'

'No, Signor Litton,' answered his companion softly, 'I have never shot any one yet, and your blood, of all men's, will certainly never stain my hands. You can kill me still, as far as my pistols are concerned,' and, with a sudden impulse, she drew them from her girdle, and placed them on the ground at Walter's feet.

'But how would your death avail me?' argued he, smiling. 'If I were to murder you—which Heaven forbid!—I should still be a prisoner, since I do not know the secret of how to leave this enchanted castle.'

'To be sure; I had forgotten that. You shall never say that I did not trust you. See here.' She picked up a small crowbar that lay at her feet, and placed it in a crevice of the wall of rock; at the touch of it, one of the huge stones of which it was composed turned noiselessly inwards, revealing a dark, low-roofed passage. 'Stoop your head, signor, and follow me.'

Walter obeyed her, and in a few steps found himself in another cave, having a small opening inland.

'Every one knows of this cavern,' said Joanna quietly; 'but of the two inner ones no one knows, save half-a-dozen persons. If my brother found that I had disclosed them to you, he would shoot me without mercy. I have, therefore, placed my life in your hands; and also your own liberty. And now,' added she with passionate energy, 'that pathway through the wood leads to the high-road to Palermo. Take it, if it so please you, and leave me to my fate. Rocco will kill me, to be sure; but you will be happy.'

'Nay, Joanna; in that case, I should certainly not be happy,' answered Walter soothingly. 'Nor do you think so ill of me as to believe it.'

'Alas! I do not think ill of you,' sighed Joanna; 'and I wish you would think less ill of me.' Her voice had sunk very low, and the words were almost inaudible to Walter, whom

the fresh air, and the sense of the opportunity of freedom (though he had no idea of taking advantage of it), was filling with unwonted pleasure.

'And how far is it from hence to Palermo?' inquired he thoughtfully.

'Not ten miles. You could reach it on foot within three hours; nor would there be any chance of falling in with my brother's men upon the road.'

Walter had not asked the question with any reference to himself, but with the view of hearing how soon Lillian might be expected to reach the city; but he had the prudence to conceal this. 'It is strange, Joanna,' said he rebukefully, 'that you, who have shewn such a generous confidence, should give no credit to others for even the commonest gratitude. Come, let us go within, lest those who are more jealous of your captive's safety than yourself should return and find him outside his cage.'

As they retraced their steps, Joanna shewed him how the inner chambers of this subterranean home were reached. The exterior cavern had nothing remarkable about it, and, indeed, had at one time been used as a cow-house by the neighbouring shepherds. Any explorer would naturally have given his attention to its extremity, but it was immediately at the entrance, on the right-hand side, that the movable stone was situated; this turned, as it were, upon a pivot, the natural mechanism of which had been assisted by art, and required from without nothing but a gentle pressure to set it in motion.

'You do not regret having confided to me this secret, Joanna?' inquired Walter, as, pencil in hand, he watched her face, preparatory to transferring it to his sketch-book, and noticed how suddenly it had grown pale and grave.

'No; I think not. I am certain you will not betray us. But, in my desire to shew I trusted you, I forgot that I was imperilling the safety of others as well as my own. To some men—poor, as you describe yourself to be—this knowledge would have been a great temptation, since it might any day produce them twelve thousand ducats.'

'How so?'

'Because that is the sum that is set upon my brother's head—and this cavern, when he is closely pursued, is his hiding-place.'

'Well, I am not so poor as to take blood-money,' answered Walter, smiling. 'Your secret is as safe with me, Joanna, as though it had never been revealed: there is my hand upon it.'

She took it, carried it to her lips, and then retained it. It was an embarrassing position for any young gentleman, not enamoured of the lady, this demonstration; and especially so, when he wanted the use of his fingers to take her portrait. Perhaps Walter would not have been so hard-hearted, had he not just parted from his Lillian, ill, perhaps dying, and whose last kiss was still lingering on his cheek; but, as it was, he gently withdrew his hand, and commenced his picture.

Under other circumstances, it would have been a task very congenial to him; for never had painter a sitter more picturesque than his present one. Joanna's charms, striking as they were at first sight, were, unlike those of dark beauties in general, even more attractive the longer the eye rested on them. Her black eyes, when in repose, as now, had a certain blueness in them, not cold,

like that of the sloe, but warm and tender; at the same time, her face wore a certain dignity, for which women are, in general, compelled to use haughtiness as the substitute. Her male attire, worn long custom, was worn without awkwardness, and became her grandly; and there were freedom and grace in every movement, when, at the artist's request, she changed the position of a limb. He had been drawing for only a few minutes, when suddenly the shrill moist note, with which Walter's ear had become familiar, was heard without; and she instantly started to her feet. 'Away, into the other room!' cried she.

Walter understood that this was lest he should appear to be a witness to the opening of the secret door, and hastened to obey her. 'Santoro and the others have returned, I suppose?'

'Hush! no,' said she, pushing him quickly out; 'it is Rocco.'

Hardly had he time to gain the inner apartment, when the stone revolved upon its pivot, and Corrali sprang into the room Walter had just quitted.

The attire of the brigand chief was torn and stained with blood; his face scarlet with haste and anger, or both, and covered with perspiration.

'Where are the Englishman and the girl?' were his first impatient words.

'The Englishman is in yonder. The girl has been sent to Palermo, at your request, as Santoro informed me.'

'Let her be followed, and brought back at once.'

'There is no one to do it; all the men went away with her, since she had to be carried on a litter. She is ill; and indeed, as I think, dying.'

'No matter; she shall die with us, not with her friends. People will say else, that we gave her up through fear. The troops have fired upon us, as if that were the way to treat with me and mine. I will have her back, alive or dead. How long is it since she left you?'

'More than three hours,' answered Joanna calmly.

It had not, in fact, been half that time, as Walter, whom not a word of this conversation escaped, though it was not all intelligible to him, was well aware.

'Il diavolo!' muttered the brigand, striking his heel into the sand of the cavern. 'It will be the worse for those that are left. Where is this fellow?' Then he strode into the inner room, and confronted Walter.

'Look you,' cried he passionately, 'you think all is well with you, because this old man's daughter has escaped from me. But you will find, unless she sends the money before the week is out, that all is not so well. There are some things that are sweeter than money. These soldiers of yours have done us a mischief; and somebody shall pay for it. Do you understand me?'

'Indeed, Captain Corrali, it is easy to understand that something has put you out of temper,' answered Walter calmly. 'But if the soldiers have attacked you, it is at least plain that neither Mr Brown nor I could have sent them.'

'They came on your account, however; and what has happened goes down to your account.—Bind his eyes, Joanna.'

'What is it you are about to do, Rocco?' inquired the girl with hesitation.

'To take him away with me at once, lest another bird should slip out of the cage.'

'But he is surely safer here than anywhere,' urged Joanna.

'Do as I bid you, or I will make him safe enough at once!' and the brigand touched one of the pistols in his belt. 'Now, fasten his arms behind him.'

'An impediment to your movements, brother.'

'Tush! Do you suppose that I am going to give him a chance of tripping me over a precipice. He will go fast enough with my knife behind him, I'll warrant.'

'What! are you going alone with him? Hark! there is the signal. Santoro and the rest will have returned.'

'So much the better for this gentleman here,' grunted the brigand, 'since he will have his arms loose. Otherwise, I should have waited for none of them.—I am not in a mood to be trifled with, Mr Englishman. It will be a word and a pistol-shot to-day with you, if you do not step out.'

'Don't answer him,' whispered Joanna in Walter's ear. 'He has spilt blood to-day, and is dangerous.'

The speech and manner of the captain were, indeed, like those of a madman. No sooner had those who had formed Lillian's escort entered the cavern, than they were ordered on the march, though two of them at least had done a good day's work in that way already. No other voice was heard save that of the furious chief; but as Walter, with blinded eyes, was quitting the cavern, he felt a parcel placed in the pocket of his shooting-coat, and the pressure of a soft hand, that seemed to bid him be of good courage.

MORAL VALUE OF AMUSEMENT.

On this subject, the following observations occur in a paper on 'The Relative Morals of City and Country,' in the *Penn Monthly*, an American periodical:

'The love of amusement is natural to the human mind, and like all other natural tastes and appetites, is given to us by our Creator for some wise and benevolent purpose. Proper amusements tend to health of body and mind. The moral nature is benefited by amusement, by preventing it becoming morbid and sickly on the one hand, and by arresting it from low and corrupting tendencies on the other. It is said that before the theatre was established in San Francisco the town was given to the lowest revelry and debauchery, and that brawls and murders were of unceasing occurrence. The reason was, men had no other resorts for amusement than to the low dens of iniquity with which the town was flooded. When the theatre was established, they were attracted to it, were amused and entertained, and the morals of the town rapidly improved. All approval of the theatre must be predicated of a well-conducted theatre, where the decencies and proprieties of life are respected, and where at least a harmless, if not an improving moral tone is blended with amusement. It is not, perhaps, too much to say, that in a great community like this we could better afford to spare one of our many churches than one of our few well-conducted theatres. The ill consequences to society in the one case would probably be greater than in the other. Man is held from evil by employment and amusement, as well as by moral teaching, and each must play its part, and supplement the other in the great work of rescuing man from the de-

structive tendencies of sin. And observation, I think, will confirm, that where men and women do not mingle amusement with labour, they either pervert labour to selfish and excessive ends, or become morbid and one-sided in their general views. In the consideration of this question, whatever has been said has been predicated upon an equal number of population, whether of city or country, and is intended to include, as a part of the country, the country towns.'

THE MAIDEN SLEEPS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

The maiden sleeps—why mourn ye in this wise,

Ye parents? Let her rest.

The little face that mid the flowers lies

Speaks to your aching breast:

'My lot is light; oh, wherefore weep?

I lay me down in peace, and sleep.'

The maiden sleeps.

The maiden sleeps—wearied from play, to rest,

Tired out with happiness.

The doll the little arms had fondly pressed,

The pretty Sunday dress,

Her story-book remembered not—

All, all her treasures now forgot—

The maiden sleeps.

The maiden sleeps—her life was peaceful made,

And light her earthly lot,

A little stream that through the flowers strayed,

With love and music fraught:

No bitter grief the child's heart pained,

Soon was the short fight fought and gained—

The maiden sleeps.

The maiden sleeps—how blest she slumbered in

Her tender Saviour's arm;

That spotless heart, unsoiled, unstained by sin,

No earthly fear could harm;

A conscience pure, a sinless breast,

This is a couch the head to rest—

The maiden sleeps.

The maiden sleeps—earth's pain, earth's strife no more

May break that sweet repose;

Know'st, mother, thou, what might have been in store

For her, of bitter woes?

She feels no more the tempest's beat,

Feels not the summer's sultry heat—

The maiden sleeps.

The maiden sleeps—only one short calm night,

That peaceful sleep will last;

And, oh, how bright the morn that greets her sight

When that brief night is o'er!

He who by His resistless will

Soothed Jairus, lives and comforts still—

The maiden sleeps.

The maiden sleeps—and now the last kiss press

Upon the lips so still.

The Father help thee in thy sore distress;

O mother! 'tis His will.

Now, as they bear her to her rest,

Sing ye the hymns she loved the best—

The maiden sleeps.

The maiden sleeps—now, Shepherd, take her home,

Thine for eternity;

Ye glorious stars, bend down from heaven's dome,

Watch o'er her tenderly;

O wind, howl not so loud and shrill

Over this little flower-decked hill—

The maiden sleeps.

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